

## ASIAN STUDIES GROUP ASSIGNMENT - KOREA

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### **Climate**

The climate of Korea is characterized by four distinct seasons: spring, summer, autumn, and winter. This seasonal diversity enables Korean farmers to yield exceedingly diverse agricultural products. Korea has general characteristics of a temperate monsoonal climate, and the contrast between summer and winter is striking. The rainy season over Korea (called jangma) continues for a month from late June until late July. It often floods farmlands and streams, destroying crops and degrading their qualities.

### **Landforms**

Different aspects of Korean landforms make the country truly unique. Nearly 70 percent of Korea is covered by mountains and hills, leaving with only 22 percent of arable land. Most of the high mountains are located along the Taebaeksan range which parallels the east coast. The Korean peninsula has neither active volcanoes nor strong earthquakes, but there are a few extinct volcanoes such as Baekdusan and Hallasan. Considering its area, Korea has a relatively large number of rivers and streams. The discharge of rivers fluctuates greatly during the summer monsoon. The large rivers that flow in the middle of Seoul (the capital city), such as Han River, serve as transportation routes and have contributed to the development of Korean economy.

### **Environment:**

South Korea is ranked ninth in consuming ozone depleting gases. That said, Korea needs to work on cleaning out its air. Another problem is water pollution. People in the past say that they could drink the water from the Han River without cleaning procedures. That is impossible for our generation to do because of the garbage and other polluting materials in the river. However, South Korea is trying to gain its environmental beauty that it had in the past. Starting in the 1970s, people started planting trees in effort to make up for the ones already cut down. The government has also made efforts to keep the environment clean by preserving the old trees and 20 national parks. Furthermore, a movie called The Host was created, which showed how water pollution could cause a deadly monster to come out of the Han River and attack the human race.

### **Natural Resources and Agriculture:**

Korea (South and North) has a reasonable amount of natural resources which are Coal, very little oil, lead, tungsten, zinc, graphite, magnetite, molybdenum, iron ore, copper, gold, pyrites, salt, flourspar, and hydropower. Valuable sources such as gold, iron ore, and oil can be found in North Korea, but not in South Korea. However, despite the disadvantage they possess, South Korea has much more arable land than the North. This gives South Korea to cultivate flourishing amount of rice, millet, corn, sorghum, buckwheat, soybeans, and potatoes. Since Korea has all four seasons, they can grow sundry of fruits such as pears, grapes, oranges, apples, peaches, red peppers, persimmons, cabbage, peaches, and radishes. Most importantly, there are cash crops increasingly being cultivated, which are ginseng, tobacco, sesame, and cotton.

**Facts and Figures:**

South Korea has the 26th largest population in the world at a total of 48,636,068 people. The population growth rate is 0.258% which gives it the ranking of 175th in the world, meaning that the population size is only gradually increasing. The life expectancy in South Korea is 78.81 years. The percentage of literacy (ability to read and write) in people over the age of 15 is 97.9%.

- Korea has more than 3,000 islands located mainly in the Yellow Sea and Korea Strait.
- The capital of South Korea is Seoul, which is the world's second-largest metropolitan city.
- Has one of the world's leading economies with a large technological base.
- 7th largest fishing industry in the world.